

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 0465

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, CI
SUBJECT: WHY CHILE VOTED AS IT DID

1. SUMMARY: THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS FOR CHILE'S NEARLY THREE HUNDRED ADMINISTRATIVE SUB-DISTRICTS DO NOT PROVIDE ANY SURPRISES. THE CASE FOR VOTE FRAUD NOT PROVEN, WE SUGGEST THAT THE THREE-TO-ONE PRO-GOC VOTE CAN BEST BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE FOLLOWING FACTORS, LISTED IN ROUGHLY DESCENDING ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: CORE SUPPORT FOR PINOCHET AND HIS REGIME; FEAR OF THE PAST; PATRIOTISM; INFORMATION MONOPOLY; AND INTIMIDATION. AT A MINIMUM THE VOTE BELIED THE CONTENTION OF THE GOC'S MOST RABID OPPONENTS THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD REPUDIATE HIM GIVEN THE SLIGHTEST OPENING. END SUMMARY

2. THE GOC HAS MADE PUBLIC THE RESULTS OF THE PLEBISCITE IN THE COUNTRY'S NEARLY 300 SUB-DIVISIONS CALLED "COMUNAS". THE BREAKDOWN (BEING POUCHED) REFLECTS THE KIND OF DISTRICT-TO-DISTRICT AND REGION-TO-REGION VARIATIONS THAT THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD PREDICT:
-- ALL OF THE SOUTH, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MAGALLANES, DELIVERED VOTES OF 79 PERCENT OR MORE FOR THE GOC WITH PINOCHET'S HOME REGION (NINTH) PRODUCING AN 87 PERCENT
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"YES". THE CENTRAL VALLEY AND NORTH CLUSTERED BETWEEN 72-76 PERCENT TOGETHER WITH TROUBLED MAGALLANES (72). SANTIAGO VOTED TO THE LEFT OF THE COUNTRY AT 68 PERCENT;
-- URBAN AREAS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS ENTHUSIASTIC THAN RURAL ONES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY;
-- IN GENERAL THE POORER URBAN DISTRICTS, PORT CITIES AND MINING TOWNS GAVE THE GOC THE LEAST SUPPORT;

-- COUNTING JUST THE "YES" AND "NO" VOTES WOMEN VOTED MORE THAN FOUR TO ONE FOR THE PROPOSITION MEN OVERALL THREE TO ONE AND URBAN MEN ONLY ABOUT TWO TO ONE.

3. WITHOUT COMPLETELY EXCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF VOTE FRAUD (SEE SANTIAGO 283), HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR THE GENERALLY HIGH LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSITION? OF THE 75 PERCENT VOTING "YES," THE LARGEST PORTION -- ABOUT 33 PERCENT -- REPRESENTED HARD-CORE PINOCHET SUPPORT WHILE PERHAPS 20 PERCENT VOTED "YES" OUT OF FEAR OF THE PAST AND ITS RESURRECTION. THE REMAINDER, 20-25 PERCENT, PROBABLY SUPPORTED THE PROPOSITION SIMPLY OUT OF UNADORNED PATRIOTISM, BECAUSE OF THE GOC'S INFORMATION MONOPOLY OR AS THE RESULT OF INTIMIDATION. WE WILL ANALYZE THESE FACTORS IN ROUGHLY DESCENDING ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE.

4. SUPPORT FOR PINOCHET: IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THOSE NOT CLOSE TO THE CHILEAN SCENE TO UNDERSTAND OR ACCEPT THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR PINOCHET. BY AND LARGE THE THIRD OF CHILE WHICH AS TRADITIONALLY BEEN ON THE RIGHT WING OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM LIKES PINOCHET'S FORCEFUL STYLE AND THE PEACE, TRANQUILITY AND RE-EMPHASIS ON THE TRADITIONAL VALUES THAT HIS REGIME HAS BROUGHT. PINOCHET'S OWN POLITICAL ABILITY SHOULD NOT BE UNDER-RATED. HE TRAVELS FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT CHILE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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MINGLES FREELY WITH CROWDS. HE HAS POPULAR DRAWING POWER THAT MANY A MORE EXPERIENCED POLITICIAN WOULD ADMIRE.

5. FEAR OF THE PAST: THE MEMORY OF THE INEPTITUDE OF CHILEAN POLITICIANS AND THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISORDER OF THE ALLENDE PERIOD STILL PLAYS THE KEY SWING ROLE. GALLUP POLLS CONSISTENTLY SHOW ONLY ABOUT 14 PERCENT OF THE SAMPLES FAVORING AN IMMEDIATE RETURN TO PARTISAN CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. THE SHADOW OF THE PAST WOULD APPEAR PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT AMONG URBAN FEMALE VOTERS WHO DEMONSTRATED A HIGH DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME, AS WELL AS FOR MANY MODERATES AND CONSERVATIVES WHO DO NOT NECESSARILY LIKE PINOCHET OR SOME OF HIS POLICIES, BUT PREFER BOTH TO THE CHAOS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORMER POLITICAL SYSTEM.

6. PATRIOTISM: THE LOADED QUESTION, FLAG BEDECKED BALLOT AND MASSIVE CAMPAIGN BASED ON CHAUVINISM WAS A BIG DRAWING CARD IN THY HYPERNATIONALISTIC COUNTRY. GALLUP POLLSTERS DEDUCED THAT 15 PERCENT OF THE PRE-SUMABLY MORE COSMOPOLITAN VOTERS OF SANTIAGO DID NOT

MUCH LIKE THE GOVERNMENT BUT PLANNED TO VOTE "YES" OUT OF PATRIOTISM. LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE VOTERS HAD REASON TO THINK A "NO" VOTE LITERALLY MEANT SUPPORT FOR A UNITED NATIONS GOVERNMENT FOR CHILE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 0465

7. PROPAGANDA BLITZ: THE QUICK VOTE (PARTICULARLY DURING THE HOLIDAY PERIOD) WOULD HAVE HAMPERED ANY OPPOSITION MOVEMENT. THE GOC'S MASSIVE AND BLANKET CAMPAIGN INUNDATED WHAT FEW PUBLIC OPPOSITION STATEMENTS APPEARED. ACCORDING TO MOST CHILEANS, OF COURSE, THEIR LITERATE POLITICIZED SOCIETY SHOULD BE RELATIVELY IMMUNE TO ADVERTISING PROGRAMS. WE QUESTION THIS PREMISE AND CREDIT THE BLITZKRIEG WITH SWAYING A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VOTERS.

8. INTIMIDATION: THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE ELEMENT HERE WAS THE WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT THE IDENTITY CARDS OF NON-VOTERS WOULD BE VOIDED. THIS DROVE THE LEAST POLITICIZED VOTERS TO THE POLLS. IN ADDITION THE GOC ENSURED THAT VOTING TABLE OFFICIALS CAME FROM RANKS OF SUPPORTERS AND ENCOURAGED ITS UPPER INCOME SUPPORTERS TO VOTE AT POLLING PLACES IN POORER AREAS (ALTHOUGH THE AIM, AS TOLD AN EMBOFF BY YOUTH SECRETARIAT ACTIVISTS WAS TO DILUTE THE EXPECTED NEGATIVE VOTE IN POOR AREAS, IT ALSO ENSURED THAT GOC LOYALISTS MINGLED WITH THE VOTERS). OTHERS WERE CONCERNED THAT THE GOC WOULD TAKE REPRISALS ON COMUNAS NOT SUPPORTING THE PROPOSITION (EVEN SOME COMMUNISTS MAY HAVE BEEN SWAYED BY A RELATED BELIEF -- SEE SANTIAGO 325). OTHERS FEARED INDIVIDUAL
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REPRISALS, AND HOW MANY OPTED FOR THE SAFER COURSE WHEN THEY SAW THROUGH THE MARKED BALLOT OF THE PERSON AHEAD IS UNKNOWN. CERTAINLY QUEASY VOTERS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN REASSURED BY THE THIN PAPER USED.

9. BY THE FOREGOING ANALYSIS, AT LEAST HALF THE CHILEAN VOTERS, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, FREELY AND KNOWLEDGEABLY VOTED FOR THE GOC. THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE DID NOT REPUDIATE THE REGIME AT ITS FIRST OPPORTUNITY. OPPONENTS OF THE GOC DO NOT MISS THE MARK BY MUCH WHEN THEY CALL THE PLEBISCITE A "FARCE." BUT EVEN AFTER DISCOUNTING THE VOTE FOR ITS FARCICAL ASPECTS (LOADED QUESTION, ONE-SIDED PROPAGANDA, ETC.), BOTH SIDES ARE MAKING REALISTIC JUDGMENTS IN PRIVATE ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE PLEBISCITE: PINOCHET STALWARTS ARE PLEASED AND OPPONENTS ARE DISAPPOINTED.
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